

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  v.  4. ABDULKADIR NUR SALAH,	Case No. 22-CR-223(4)(NEB/DTS)
Plaintiff,  Defendant.	<b>DEFENDANT'S AMENDED PROPOSED VOIR DIRE QUESTIONS</b>

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The defendant, Abdulkadir Nur Salah respectfully files these Amended Proposed Voir Dire Questions based on recent publicity surrounding the government's pretrial filings in this case.

**PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

1. What is your name and address? How long have you lived there?
2. What other states or countries have you lived in during the last 10 years? For how long?
3. Are you single, partnered, married, or divorced?
4. How old are you?
5. What race/ethnicity best describes you?
6. Have you ever served in the military? Please describe.
7. Describe your educational background, including the last grade or level of education you completed, the name of any vocational schools or colleges attended, and your major areas of study.
8. Are you currently employed? If so, what is your occupation?

9. Who is your employer and what type of company or organization is it? Where is your employer located? How long have you worked for this employer? What are your title and job responsibilities?
10. If you are unemployed, retired, disabled, a full-time homemaker, or a student, what type of work did you do most recently, including volunteer work? When were you last employed, how long did you work there, and who was your employer?
11. For any job you hold or have held, including volunteer work, did your job require you to manage other people?
12. Do you have any children? If so, what is the age, gender, level of education, and occupation (if employed) of your children?
13. Does anyone else live with you, such as a spouse, domestic partner, or children?
14. What are the ages, levels of education, and occupations of those who live with you? If employed, who is their employer?
15. Have you ever worked with government or other social services programs, as a job, volunteer, or in any other capacity? Please explain.
16. Have you, or anyone close to you, ever been elected, appointed, or served on a corporate or nonprofit board or government office, committee, advisory board, or commission? Please describe.
17. What organizations do you belong to, including veteran's groups, service clubs, unions, volunteer groups, religious organizations, church or temple, neighborhood organizations, educational organizations, and political organizations?
18. What are your hobbies and spare time activities?

19. Would people describe you as a person who typically makes decisions using emotion, gut, and intuition? Or typically analysis, calculation, and methodology? Please describe.
20. Did you know any of your fellow jurors prior to meeting them here today?
21. Do you have any mental or physical condition which would make it difficult for you to sit as a juror?
22. Are you dealing with any pressing matters in your life such as the death or sickness of a loved one that would make it difficult for you to sit as a juror?
23. Is there anything about the anticipated length or anticipated daily schedule of this trial that serving as a juror would create an undue hardship in your personal, work, or family life? If yes, please explain.
24. Do you have any religious beliefs that would prevent you from sitting as a juror in judgement of another person?

#### **PRIOR LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

25. Have you ever served on a jury, including a grand jury? If so, when, and what court? Did you reach a verdict? Was it a criminal or civil case? Were you ever the foreperson?
26. Was there anything about your previous experience that would lead you to feel that you may have some feelings either for or against the prosecution or defense?
27. Have you ever been a witness in court or in a deposition? If yes, please explain.
28. Have you ever sued anyone or been sued? If yes, please explain.
29. Have you ever called the police or reported a crime? If yes, please explain.

30. Do you have any legal training, or have you taken any law courses?
31. Have you, or has anyone close to you, ever been employed in any of the following areas: (a) federal, state, or local government, (b) law or the courts, or (c) law enforcement? If yes, please explain.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE EXPERIENCE**

32. Have you, or has anyone close to you, ever had any previous contacts with the criminal justice system, either as a victim of a crime, a person accused of a crime, or a witness to a crime? Please describe this experience and how you believe it impacts your view of the criminal justice system or sitting as a juror.
33. Do you know any police officers or other people who work in law enforcement? If so, please tell us how you know them and how frequently you are in contact with them.
34. Do you have any opinions about prosecutors or defense attorneys that may affect you in deciding this case?
35. Do you believe it is proper for the government to provide incentives for a witness to testify, including the incentive of a lesser prison term, conditioned on the testimony being favorable to the prosecution?
36. Would you tend to disbelieve the testimony of a witness who has been previously convicted of a crime? Please explain.
37. Do you believe our criminal justice system works properly and fairly for all people? What is your opinion on the criminal justice system?

**RACE, ETHNICITY, AND EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT BIAS**

38. Have your personal, professional, social, religious, educational, or other activities brought you into contact with people whose backgrounds are in East Africa, particularly Somalia? Please describe.

39. Do you work with any people from Somalia or of East African decent?

40. Do you have any family or close friends who are from Somalia or of East African decent?

41. Are you, or is anyone close to you a first-generation immigrant?

42. Do you work with any person who is a first-generation immigrant?

43. Have you or a close associate of yours engaged in any business activities with an East African business or person?

44. We all have feelings, assumptions, perceptions, fears and stereotypes about others.

Some biases we are aware of and others we might not be aware of, these are called “implicit or unconscious bias.” No matter how unbiased we think we are; our brains are hardwired to make unconscious decisions. Bias can affect our thoughts, how we remember what we see and hear, whom we believe or disbelieve, and how we make important decisions. Two common unconscious biases are people from another race or ethnicity than ours and people who were born in another Country.

- If selected as a juror, would you feel comfortable committing yourself to thinking about why you are making the decision you are and examining it for bias?

- Because people involved in this case are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds than yourself can you commit yourself to carefully evaluate the evidence and resist any urge to reach a verdict influenced by a hidden or unconscious bias?

45. Do you have any feelings or beliefs about any particular race that would prevent you from being unbiased about a person of any race?

46. Do you have any feelings or beliefs about immigrants that would prevent you from being completely unbiased about a person who is an immigrant?

47. Do you have any feelings or beliefs about any religion, or about people who have different religious beliefs than your own, that would prevent you from being completely unbiased about a person with any particular religious beliefs?

48. Do you have feelings or beliefs about gender that would prevent you from being unbiased against a person of any gender?

### **CASE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

49. Have you, or anyone close to you, ever held a job in agriculture, food sales, restaurants, institutional meal planning, or government programs in any of these areas? Please describe.

50. Have you ever worked with government or other social services programs, as a job, volunteer, or in any other capacity? Please explain.

51. Have you ever worked with or had exposure to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) or their programs, as a job, volunteer, or in any other capacity? Please explain.

52. Have you ever heard of or ever been in contact with the following companies?

Feeding our Futures, Partners in Nutrition, Safari Restaurant, Cosmopolitan Business Solutions, Cosmopolitan Business Properties, Bet on Better Future, Total Financial Solutions? If so, how?

53. Have you, or anyone else you know had prior contact with the defendants, defense attorneys, prosecutors, judge, or court staff in this case? [*Names of parties, lawyers, case agents, and witnesses*].

54. This case concerns allegations of fraud. Have you or someone you know ever been defrauded, regardless of whether the fraud was ever reported or prosecuted? Please explain.

55. Are you more likely to treat the testimony of law enforcement officers with more weight, less weight, or the same as other witnesses? If so, why?

56. Several witnesses in this trial are likely to be law enforcement officers or criminal investigative agents of the United States. Do you believe that a law enforcement officer is more likely to tell the truth than other people?

57. Recognizing the Defendants in a criminal case do not need to call any witnesses at all, and the burden of proof always remains on the government, do you believe you would be more likely to trust the testimony of a witness depending on which side called the witness to testify, either the government or by a defendant?

58. Have you or has anyone close to you ever received any food or other benefit from a Federal Child Nutrition Program, including the Summer Food Service Program or the

Child and Adult Care Food Program, or any other state or federal program involving the distribution of food? If so, please tell us about that.

59. This case involves allegations of fraud relating to Federal Nutrition Programs that are designed to help feed children and certain adults. Is there anything about the fact that this case involves allegations regarding the feeding of children that would impact your ability to be fair to both sides and objectively consider the evidence presented? Please explain.

60. Are you familiar with the area of Minneapolis around the intersection of East Lake Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, or the areas often referred to as the Phillips, Central, and Powderhorn neighborhoods of Minneapolis? If so, how often do you find yourself in these areas of Minneapolis and why do you tend to go to these locations?

#### **MEDIA EXPOSURE**

61. What is your primary source of news?

62. How often do you read a hard copy or online version of a newspaper?

63. What newspapers do you regularly read?

64. What podcasts or radio do you regularly listen to?

65. How often do you listen to local news on the radio or watch local news on television or online?

66. Which local radio or television news station do you listen to or watch most?

67. What social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, or TikTok, do you use regularly, if any?

68. How often do you see local news or news related updates on those social media sites?

69. What have you heard about this case before today? If so, from what source and what you have heard about this case?
70. Have you heard or read anything about an entity called Feeding Our Future? If so, what have you heard?
71. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you heard the name “Feeding Our Future?” Why do you feel that way?
72. What do you know about this case from media reports? It is important for the parties to know all of the details you remember about these events, the case, Feeding our Future, and Defendants Aimee Bock, Salim Said, Abdulkadir Salah, or Abdi Nur Salah. Please take your time to search your memory and provide a full account of what you recall from what you have heard or seen in the media. This will help to shorten the jury selection process.
73. Have you watched any news broadcast either on television or the internet that discussed Feeding our Future, any of the Defendants, or any of the events related to this case?
74. Have you read any news articles, either in print or on the internet, that discussed Feeding our Future, any of the Defendants, or any of the events related to this case?
75. Specifically, have you received news or information from any source regarding Feeding Our Future or any of the Defendants in the last two months? If so, what information have you received and what source did you receive it from?
76. From what you have seen, read, or heard, what are your general impressions of Feeding our Future?

- Why do you feel that way?
77. From what you have seen, read, or heard, what are your general impressions of Defendants Aimee Bock, Salim Said, Abdulkadir Salah, or Abdi Nur Salah?
- Why do you feel that way?
78. From what you have seen, read, or heard, what are your general impressions of the Minnesota Department of Education?
- Why do you feel that way?
79. From what you have seen, read, or heard, what are your general impressions of any investigation conducted by either the United States Attorney's Office, the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, or the Minnesota Department of Education related to Feeding our Future, any of the Defendants, or any of the events related to this case?
- Why do you feel that way?
80. Have you ever talked about Feeding our Future, any of the Defendants, or any of the events related to this case with any of your family, friends, or coworkers, or discussed them online, for example, on social media?
- What opinions did you express during those conversations?

#### **FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS AND PRESUMPTIONS**

81. The court will instruct you that the Indictment returned by the grand jury is the formal document by which the government starts its case against a defendant. The Indictment is not evidence against a defendant and does not create an inference of guilt. Are you able to accept the law that the Indictment is merely an accusation, does not change the

presumption that the Defendants are innocent, and that the Indictment is not evidence against a defendant?

82. The Court will instruct you that a person who has been charged with a crime is presumed innocent. Are you able to accept the law that the defendants in this case are presumed innocent of the charges in the indictment?

83. Do you have any negative views about any of the defendants because they have been accused of breaking the law?

84. Do you believe that the fact that the defendants have been accused of crimes makes it more likely that they are guilty of those crimes?

85. As you sit here today, do you have any opinions about this case or what the results in this case should be?

86. Is there anything about this case which causes you to have any feelings of prejudice or sympathy one way or another?

#### **FINAL QUESTION**

87. Is there anything else that the judge or lawyers should know about you that could affect your ability to serve as an impartial juror on this case?

Dated: January 14, 2025

**GREENE ESPEL PLLP**

s/ Surya Saxena

Surya Saxena, Reg. No. 0339465  
Nicholas Scheiner, Reg. No. 0402470  
222 S. Ninth Street, Suite 2200  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
[ssaxena@greenespel.com](mailto:ssaxena@greenespel.com)  
[nscheiner@greenespel.com](mailto:nscheiner@greenespel.com)  
(612) 373-0830

Attorneys for Defendant Abdulkadir Nur  
Salah